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P8_TA(2017)0207

Resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety**European Parliament resolution of 16 May 2017 on initiative on resource efficiency: reducing food waste, improving food safety (2016/2223(INI))**

(2018/C 307/03)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Closing the loop — An EU action plan for the Circular Economy’ (COM(2015)0614),
- having regard to the Commission communication entitled ‘Towards a circular economy: A zero waste programme for Europe’ (COM(2014)0398),
- having regard to its resolution of 9 July 2015 on resource efficiency: moving towards a circular economy ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to Written Declaration 0061/2015 of 14 October 2015 on the donation of unsold consumable food to charities,
- having regard to its resolution of 19 January 2012 on how to avoid food wastage: strategies for a more efficient food chain in the EU ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to its resolution of 7 June 2016 on unfair trading practices in the food supply chain ⁽³⁾,
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 28 June 2016 on food losses and food waste,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions of 15 June 2016 on food waste ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 20 March 2013 on ‘Civil society’s contribution to a strategy for prevention and reduction of food losses and food waste’ ⁽⁵⁾,
- having regard to the Special Report No 34/2016 of the European Court of Auditors entitled ‘Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain’,
- having regard to the resolution of the United Nations Environment Assembly of 27 May 2016 on prevention, reduction and reuse of food waste,
- having regard to the European Economic and Social Committee Comparative Study of June 2014 on EU Member States’ legislation and practices on food donation,
- having regard to the FUSIONS (Food Use for Social Innovation by Optimising Waste Prevention Strategies) study on estimates of European food waste levels (2016),
- having regard to the FUSIONS review of EU legislation and policies with implications on food waste (2015),

⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2015)0266.

⁽²⁾ OJ C 227 E, 6.8.2013, p. 25.

⁽³⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0250.

⁽⁴⁾ OJ C 17, 18.1.2017, p. 28.

⁽⁵⁾ OJ C 161, 6.6.2013, p. 46.

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- having regard to the FUSIONS Definitional Framework for Food Waste (2014),
 - having regard to the global Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard (FLW standard) launched in June 2016,
 - having regard to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) study 'Food wastage footprint — Impacts on natural resources' (FAO 2013),
 - having regard to the FAO study on global food losses and food waste (FAO 2011),
 - having regard to the petition 'Stop Food Waste in Europe!',
 - having regard to the Charter of Milan adopted during the Expo Milano 2015,
 - having regard to Rule 52 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety and the opinion of the Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development (A8-0175/2017),
- A. whereas the FAO estimates that each year approximately 1,3 billion tonnes of food, which amounts to approximately one-third, by weight, of all food produced for human consumption in the world, is lost or wasted;
- B. whereas food is a precious commodity; whereas, as the 'food system' utilises a significant amount of resources, such as land, soil, water, phosphorous and energy, the efficient and sustainable management of these resources is of the utmost importance; whereas food waste entails massive economic and environmental costs, which are estimated by the FAO ⁽¹⁾ to be USD 1,7 trillion per year on a global scale; whereas the prevention and reduction of food waste provides economic benefits for both households and society as a whole, while also reducing environmental damage;
- C. whereas food wastage has high social, economic and environmental costs, as well as ethical consequences; whereas food that is lost or wasted contributes to climate change, with a global carbon footprint of about 8 % of total anthropogenic global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and represents a waste of scarce resources such as land, energy and water ⁽²⁾ throughout the lifecycle of the products involved; whereas food chain surpluses should not directly become food waste when they could otherwise be used for human nutrition, and appropriate legislation on food surpluses could enable food waste to become a resource;
- D. whereas, according to recent studies, for every kilogram of food produced, 4,5 kg of CO₂ are released into the atmosphere; whereas in Europe the approximately 89 Mt of wasted food generate 170 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, broken down as follows: food industry 59 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, domestic consumption 78 Mt CO₂ eq./yr, other 33 Mt CO₂ eq./yr; whereas the production of the 30 % of food which ends up not being consumed is responsible for an additional 50 % of water resource irrigation use, while the production of one kilogram of beef requires 5-10 tonnes of water;
- E. whereas according to several studies, extensive dietary change is proven to be the most effective method for reducing the environmental impact of food consumption; whereas achieving a sustainable food production and consumption system in Europe requires comprehensive and integrated food policy;

⁽¹⁾ FAO, 'Food wastage footprint. Impacts on natural resources', Rome, 2013.

⁽²⁾ FAO, 2015. Food wastage footprint and climate change.

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- F. whereas according to the World Food Programme (WFP), 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy and active life; whereas poor nutrition is responsible for nearly half (45 %) — approximately 3,1 million — of all deaths in children under the age of five; whereas one in six children in the world are underweight and one in four are stunted; whereas the reduction of food waste is therefore not only an economic and environmental obligation, but also a moral one ⁽¹⁾;
- G. whereas almost 793 million people in the world today are malnourished ⁽²⁾, and more than 700 million people live below the poverty line ⁽³⁾ on incomes of less than USD 1,90 per day; whereas any irresponsible use of natural resources intended for food production and any food wastage should therefore be considered morally unacceptable;
- H. whereas less food waste would mean more efficient land use, better water resource management, and positive consequences for the whole agricultural sector worldwide, and would boost the fight against undernourishment in the developing world;
- I. whereas the EU has signed the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015; whereas Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12,3 is aimed at reducing by 50 % per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels by 2030 and reducing food losses along production and supply chains, including losses in primary production, transportation and storage; whereas the UN estimates that the world's population will increase from 7,3 billion people today to 9,7 billion in 2050 ⁽⁴⁾; whereas the reduction of food waste is an essential step in reducing world hunger and a necessity for feeding an ever growing world population;
- J. whereas the Consumer Goods Forum, which represents 400 retailers, manufacturers, service providers and other stakeholders across 70 countries, has adopted a public resolution to halve food waste from its members' own operations by 2025, five years ahead of SDG 12.3;
- K. whereas the prevention of food waste brings environmental benefits and advantages in social and economic terms; whereas estimates indicate that 88 million tonnes of food are wasted in the EU each year, equating to 173 kg of wasted food per person, and that the production and disposal of the EU's food waste generates 170 tonnes of CO₂ emissions and consumes 26 million tonnes of resources; whereas the costs associated with this level of food waste are estimated to amount to around EUR 143 billion ⁽⁵⁾; whereas according to the FAO, 800 million people in the world suffer from hunger;
- L. whereas, according to data from 2014, 55 million people, or 9,6 % of the EU-28 population, were unable to afford a quality meal every second day; whereas, according to data from 2015, 118,8 million people, or 23,7 % of the EU-28 population, were at risk of poverty and social exclusion ⁽⁶⁾;
- M. whereas reducing food waste can improve the economic situation for households without lowering living standards;
- N. whereas unfair trade practices and price dumping in the food sector frequently lead to food being sold at a price that is lower than its actual value, which in turn creates more waste;

⁽¹⁾ <https://www.wfp.org/hunger/stats>.

⁽²⁾ The State of Food Insecurity in the World 2015, FAO, UN.

⁽³⁾ Development Goals in an Era of Demographic Change, Global Monitoring Report 2015/2016, World Bank.

⁽⁴⁾ <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/news/population/2015-report.html>

⁽⁵⁾ FUSIONS, Estimates of European food waste levels, March 2016.

⁽⁶⁾ Eurostat, 'People at risk of poverty or social exclusion'.

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- O. whereas food is lost or wasted at all steps of the food chain, including production, processing, transport, storage, retail, marketing and consumption; whereas estimates from the FUSIONS project indicate that the sectors contributing the most to food waste within the EU are households, at 53 %, and processing, at 19 %, the other contributors being retailers at 12 %, primary production at 10 %, and wholesalers at 5 %⁽¹⁾; whereas these estimates suggest that measures to reduce food waste in households and processing sectors would have the greatest impact; whereas food waste in developing countries occurs mainly due to infrastructural and technological limitations;
- P. whereas the data from the FUSIONS project originate from a number of sources and are based on the use of various definitions of 'food waste';
- Q. whereas the FUSIONS project noted that there are very few measurements of waste in agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, fisheries or other primary production activities; whereas this prevents a good assessment of the actual scale of food loss and waste in Europe;
- R. whereas targeted measures, tailored to the operators and the relevant step in the chain, are a better way of combating food waste, as the problems encountered are not the same across the board;
- S. whereas a study carried out in the UK by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) in 2015 indicated that at least 60 % of household food waste is avoidable and could have been consumed had it been managed better⁽²⁾;
- T. whereas some losses and waste in primary production are the result of retailer standards on product specifications, cancelled orders due to changes in consumer demand, and overproduction as a result of requirements to meet seasonal demands; whereas food spoilage on the production line is another reason for the loss of food during production;
- U. whereas according to the FAO, in Europe 20 % of fruits and vegetables, 20 % of roots and tuber crops, and 10 % of oilseeds and pulses are lost in agriculture, with a further 5 % of fruits and vegetables and roots and tuber crops lost post-harvest⁽³⁾;
- V. whereas fruits and vegetables damaged by a natural disaster or destroyed or ploughed over on family farms as a result of a loss of a market or low prices represent a loss of investment and income for farmers;
- W. whereas operators in the food supply chain often internalise the cost of food waste and include it in the final consumer price of the product⁽⁴⁾;
- X. whereas the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 34/2016 on Combating Food Waste examined the question 'Does the EU contribute to a resource-efficient food supply chain by combating food waste effectively?'; whereas the findings of the report indicate that the EU is not combating food waste effectively at present, and that existing initiatives and policies could be used more effectively to address the problem of food waste; whereas the report stated that the Commission's ambition to tackle food waste has diminished despite several requests from the European Parliament and the Member States to address the issue; whereas the report considers the Commission's action thus far to be fragmented, intermittent and lacking clear coordination; whereas the report recommends that the Commission should: develop an action plan for the years ahead, consider food waste in its future impact assessments,

⁽¹⁾ FUSIONS, Estimates of European food waste levels, March 2016.

⁽²⁾ WRAP, 2015. 'Household Food Waste in the UK', 2015.

⁽³⁾ FAO (2011) 'Global food losses and food waste'.

⁽⁴⁾ European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 34/2016, 'Combating Food Waste: an opportunity for the EU to improve the resource-efficiency of the food supply chain', p. 14.

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better align the different EU policies which can combat food waste, and clarify the interpretation of legal provisions that can discourage food donation, as well as consider how to facilitate donation in other policy areas;

- Y. whereas the Commission, having invested a substantial amount of resources, and having held a very successful public consultation in 2013, ultimately decided not to publish the communication entitled 'Building a Sustainable European Food System', despite the fact that the communication had already been finalised and agreed by three Commissioners (DG Environment, DG SANCO and DG AGRI); whereas this communication contains a number of good approaches for addressing the problem of food waste;
- Z. whereas there is neither a common and consistent definition of 'food waste', nor a common methodology for measuring food waste at Union level yet, which makes it difficult to compare different datasets and to measure progress made in food waste reduction; whereas the difficulties associated with collecting full, reliable and harmonised data are an additional obstacle in evaluating food waste in the EU; whereas for the purpose of this resolution, 'food waste' means food intended for human consumption, either in edible or inedible status, removed from the production or supply chain to be discarded at primary production, processing, manufacturing, transportation, storage, retail and consumer levels, with the exception of primary production losses; whereas a definition of 'primary production losses' needs to be established;
- AA. whereas a distinction needs to be made between edible food waste and inedible parts of waste in order to avoid misleading conclusions and ineffective measures; whereas the focus of reduction efforts should be on avoiding edible food waste;
- AB. whereas the Food Loss and Waste Protocol is a multi-stakeholder effort that has yielded the development of a global accounting and reporting standard (known as the FLW Standard), for quantifying food and associated inedible parts removed from the food supply chain ⁽¹⁾;
- AC. whereas monitoring, not only of how much is wasted, but also of the quantities of surpluses and food recovered, can provide a more complete picture, which could be useful in launching sound policies at EU level;
- AD. whereas the waste management hierarchy established by the Waste Framework Directive ⁽²⁾ (prevention, preparing for re-use, recycling, recovery and disposal) does not take account of the specific features of food waste, which is a highly variant waste stream; whereas currently there is no specific hierarchy for the management of unconsumed food and food waste at EU level; whereas a food waste hierarchy which takes the entire food chain into account should be established; whereas prevention and re-use for human consumption ought to be the priority measures;
- AE. whereas, with the right incentivising policies, food surpluses could be recovered and used to feed people;
- AF. whereas there is the potential for optimising the use of former foodstuffs and by-products from the food chain in animal feed production;
- AG. whereas food waste incineration and landfilling are still ongoing practices in some areas of the EU and run counter to the circular economy;

⁽¹⁾ Food Loss and Waste Accounting and Reporting Standard, 2016.

⁽²⁾ Directive 2008/98/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on waste and repealing certain Directives (OJ L 312, 22.11.2008, p. 3).

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- AH. whereas Article 9(1)(f) of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2011 on the provision of food information to consumers ⁽¹⁾ requires food business operators to indicate the date of minimum durability ('best before' date) or the 'use by' date of a food;
- AI. whereas date marking on food products is poorly understood, especially by consumers; whereas 'best before' labelling indicates the date after which an item of food may generally still be eaten but may not be at its best in terms of quality, while 'use by' labelling indicates the date after which an item of food is no longer safe to eat; whereas not even half of EU citizens understand the meanings of 'best before' and 'use by' labelling ⁽²⁾; whereas the use of 'best before' and 'use by' labelling and the ways in which it is understood varies from one Member State to another, and between different producers, processors and distributors, even if the product is the same; whereas according to Article 13 of Regulation (EU) No 1169/2011 on food information to consumers the due date has to be easy to find on a product and clearly legible;
- AJ. whereas the donation of unsold food along the entire food chain leads to considerable reductions in food waste, while also helping people in need of food who cannot afford to purchase particular food products or a sufficient quantity of food of the same quality; whereas supermarkets and gastronomic outlets could play a distinctive role in this process;
- AK. whereas Union funds such as the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) facilitate the donation of food by financing, *inter alia*, the storage and transport infrastructure for donated food; whereas Member States do not make enough use of FEAD;
- AL. whereas getting consumable surplus food to those in need is hindered by a bottleneck in the capacity of the distribution channel, or sometimes the complete lack of capacity of that channel; whereas charitable organisations and institutions which carry out social work and are maintained by the state or local authorities lack sufficient financial and human resources to be able to transport and distribute consumable food offered for charitable purposes; whereas this is especially true of the most disadvantaged regions;
- AM. whereas social and bottom-up programmes, such as food banks or eateries operated by charitable organisations, reduce food wastage and help the poorest people, and therefore also help to establish a responsible and aware society;
- AN. whereas in the Single Market many companies produce food for more than one country; whereas unsold products from such companies in some instances cannot be donated in the country of production because of labelling in foreign languages;
- AO. whereas food donors are considered as 'food business operators' under the General Food Law Regulation ⁽³⁾ and hence have to comply with all EU food legislation concerning responsibility, liability, traceability and the food safety rules established by the Food Hygiene Package ⁽⁴⁾; whereas the risks associated with the liability for donated food may drive potential food donors to discard surplus food instead of donating it ⁽⁵⁾;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 304, 22.11.2011, p. 18.

⁽²⁾ Flash Eurobarometer 425, 'Food waste and date marking', September 2015.

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority and laying down procedures in matters of food safety (OJ L 31, 1.2.2002, p. 1).

⁽⁴⁾ Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 on the hygiene of foodstuffs (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 1); Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific hygiene rules for food of animal origin (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 55); Regulation (EC) No 854/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 29 April 2004 laying down specific rules for the organisation of official controls on products of animal origin intended for human consumption (OJ L 139, 30.4.2004, p. 206).

⁽⁵⁾ Comparative Study on EU Member States' legislation and practices on food donation (2014), commissioned by the European Economic and Social Council.

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- AP. whereas, owing to existing administrative barriers, major retail chains and supermarkets deem it acceptable to throw away food close to the 'best before' date instead of donating it;
- AQ. whereas the Commission is currently working on a clarification of European legislation on donations;
- AR. whereas several Member States have already adopted national legislation to restrict the creation of food waste, with Italy, specifically, having adopted legislation that facilitates food donation and distribution for social solidarity purposes by excluding donor liability for food that is donated in good faith and known to be fit for consumption at the time of donation;
- AS. whereas countries may also adopt national voluntary guidelines for food donations, such as those prepared by the food safety authorities in Finland, which are aimed at reducing avoidable food waste;
- AT. whereas Council Directive 2006/112/EC of 28 November 2006 on the common system of value added tax ⁽¹⁾ (VAT Directive) provides that food donations are taxable and that tax exemptions on food donations are not allowed; whereas the Commission recommends that, for tax purposes, the value of donated food close to the best before date or not fit for sale should be set 'fairly low, even close to zero' ⁽²⁾; whereas some Member States incentivise food donations by 'abandoning' VAT liability, but conformity with the VAT Directive is unclear; whereas other Member States offer a corporate tax credit on donated food ⁽³⁾;
- AU. whereas, unfortunately, in many Member States, it is more expensive to donate surplus food that is fit for consumption than to send it for anaerobic digestion, which is contrary to the public interest, given the number of people living in extreme poverty;
- AV. whereas food packaging makes an important contribution to the reduction of food waste and sustainability by extending the usable life of and protecting products; whereas food packaging that is recyclable and obtained from renewable raw materials can further contribute to environmental and resource efficiency objectives;
- AW. whereas active and intelligent food contact materials can improve the quality of packaged food and extend its shelf life, can better monitor the condition of packaged food, and can provide information on food freshness;
- AX. whereas dealing with food which is thrown away takes up additional resources;
- AY. whereas combating food waste also brings economic benefits, as each euro spent on preventing food waste makes it possible to avoid 265 kg of food waste, with a value of EUR 535, enables local authorities to save EUR 9 on the cost of waste, and enables EUR 50 to be saved on environmental costs linked to greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution ⁽⁴⁾;
- AZ. whereas action to reduce food waste should be taken at the appropriate level; whereas local and regional authorities have a key role to play in reducing food waste through their responsibilities and competences in waste management, their capacities for initiating and running local campaigns, as well as their direct contact and cooperation with civil society and charity organisations, in view of their large share in public procurement and, in many cases, their authority over educational institutions;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 347, 11.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ Joint answer to two written parliamentary questions (E-003730/13, E-002939/13), 7 May 2013.

⁽³⁾ Comparative Study on EU Member States' legislation and practices on food donation (2014), commissioned by the European Economic and Social Council.

⁽⁴⁾ Commission staff working document, executive summary of the impact assessment, impact assessment on measures addressing food waste to complete SWD(2014)0207 regarding the review of EU waste management targets (SWD(2014)0289, 23.9.2014).

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- BA. whereas the exchange of good practices at European and international level, as well as assistance for developing countries, are of major importance in combating food waste worldwide;
- BB. whereas since the second semester of 2013, the European Parliament has been implementing a comprehensive policy with the aim of drastically reducing food waste produced by its catering services; whereas unconsumed food from overproduction is regularly donated by the Parliament's main facilities in Brussels;
1. Stresses the urgent need to reduce the amount of food waste, and to improve resource efficiency in the Union at every step of the food chain, including production, processing, transport, storage, retail, marketing and consumption, taking into account that in highly industrialised countries food is wasted predominantly at the sales and consumption stages, while in developing countries food begins to be wasted at the manufacturing and processing stages; underlines, in this regard, the importance of political leadership and of a commitment from both the Commission and the Member States; recalls that the European Parliament has repeatedly asked the Commission to take action against food waste;
 2. More specifically, urges the reduction in the amount of food waste generated at the retail and consumer levels and the reduction of food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses;
 3. Insists therefore on the need to improve communication between all actors in the food supply chain, in particular between suppliers and distributors, in order to match supply and demand;
 4. Calls for a coordinated policy response at EU and Member State level, in line with the respective competences, that not only takes into account policies on waste, food safety and information, but also elements of economic, fiscal, financial, research and innovation, environment, structural (agriculture and fisheries), education, social, trade, consumer protection, energy and public procurement policies; calls, in this regard, for coordination between the EU and the Member States; emphasises that the EU's efforts to reduce food waste should be strengthened and better aligned; notes that businesses along the food supply chain are for the most part SMEs, which should not be burdened with unreasonable additional administration;
 5. Urges the Commission to involve all the relevant Commission services which deal with food waste and to ensure continued and strengthened coordination at Commission level; calls on the Commission, therefore, to employ a systematic approach that addresses all aspects of food waste and to establish a comprehensive action plan on food waste covering the various policy areas and outlining the strategy for the years ahead;
 6. Calls on the Commission to identify European legislation that might hamper the effective combating of food waste and analyse how it might be adapted to meet the food waste prevention objective;
 7. Calls on the Commission, when conducting impact assessments on new relevant legislative proposals, to evaluate their potential impact on food waste;
 8. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to put existing financial support for combating food waste on a permanent footing; calls on the Member States to make better use of the opportunities offered in this area by the various European Union policies and funding programmes;
 9. Stresses the responsibility of the competent authorities in the Member States to develop a tailored approach to combat food waste within the EU framework; acknowledges the important work that has already been carried out in several Member States;
 10. Calls on the Commission and Member States to engage in awareness-raising and communication campaigns on how to prevent food waste;
 11. Calls on the Member States to take measures to reduce food losses along the whole supply chain, including in primary production, transportation and storage;

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12. Calls on the Member States to take the measures required to achieve a Union food waste reduction target of 30 % by 2025 and 50 % by 2030 compared to the 2014 baseline;
13. Calls on the Commission to examine, by 31 December 2020, the possibility of setting up binding Union-wide food waste reduction targets to be met by 2025 and 2030 on the basis of measurements calculated in accordance with a common methodology; calls on the Commission to draw up a report, accompanied by a legislative proposal, if appropriate;
14. Invites the Member States to monitor and assess the implementation of their food waste reduction measures by measuring the levels of food waste on the basis of a common methodology; urges the Commission to support a legally binding definition of food waste and to adopt, by 31 December 2017, a common methodology, including minimum quality requirements, for the uniform measurement of food waste levels; believes that a common EU definition and methodology for measuring food 'loss', applicable to the entire supply chain, would facilitate Member States' and stakeholders' efforts in calculating and reducing food waste;
15. Urges the Commission and Member States to use the following definition of 'food waste': 'food waste means food intended for human consumption, either in edible or inedible status, removed from the production or supply chain to be discarded, including at primary production, processing, manufacturing, transportation, storage, retail and consumer levels, with the exception of primary production losses';
16. Calls on the Commission to draw a clear distinction in its future policies between food wastage and food loss, which is unavoidable at primary production level owing to force majeure events such as storms;
17. Calls on the Commission to include food losses in the agricultural and other primary production sectors in its calculations, in order to ensure an approach which takes the entire supply chain into account; notes, nevertheless, that quantifying losses at the primary production stage can be difficult and calls on the Commission to identify best practices to assist Member States in gathering such data;
18. Calls on the Commission to work on a common definition of the concept of 'loss' at each step in the food chain, and a common measurement methodology in collaboration with the Member States and all the parties involved;
19. Notes the difficulty in quantifying food wastage and food loss at the primary production stage due to the heterogeneous products and respective processes and the lack of a clear definition of food waste; calls on the Commission to identify and disseminate to Member States best practice in relation to gathering data on food loss and food waste on farms without placing an additional administrative or cost burden on farmers;
20. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consult all relevant stakeholders on the statistical methodology and other measures to be implemented to prevent food waste throughout the Union and in all sectors;
21. Notes that there is no common EU definition and methodology for measuring 'surplus food'; points out that Italy has adopted legislation that defines food chain surpluses and provides a hierarchy for the recovery of surpluses, giving priority to human consumption; calls on the Commission to explore the effects of said legislation on food donation and food waste in Italy, and to consider proposing similar legislation at EU level if necessary;
22. Calls for a specific food waste hierarchy to be applied in Directive 2008/98/EC as follows:
 - (a) source prevention;
 - (b) edible food rescue, prioritising human use over animal feed and the reprocessing into non-food products;

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(c) organic recycling;

(d) energy recovery;

(e) disposal;

23. Highlights the initiatives contained in the Circular Economy Action Plan covering measures for establishing a financial support platform to attract investment and innovations aimed at reducing losses, as well as the guidelines addressed to the Member States for converting some food losses or agricultural by-products into energy;

24. Stresses that energy needs should be met by using waste and by-products that are not useful in any other process higher up the waste hierarchy;

25. Stresses that successfully combating food waste also requires strong recycling levels in the revised Waste Framework Directive and the integration of the cascading principle for biomass in EU energy policy;

26. Stresses the need to include an obligation for the Member States to annually notify the Commission of the total level of food waste generated in a specific year;

27. Calls on the Member States to adopt specific food waste prevention measures within their waste prevention programmes; calls on the Member States in particular to establish voluntary agreements and to create economic and fiscal incentives for donating food and other means of limiting food waste;

28. Considers, specifically, that, with a view to ensuring a high level of environmental protection and an output, including digestate and compost, with high quality standards, the Member States should encourage home composting and separate out bio-waste at source, and ensure that this waste is subject to bio-recycling; considers that the Member States should also prohibit the placing of bio-waste in landfills;

29. Notes the contamination risk involved from plastic and metal in food waste inputs to compost and soil, and onwards to freshwater and marine ecosystems, and urges that this pollution route be minimised; recalls, in addition, the intention of the directive on the use of sewage sludge in agriculture to minimise contamination in agricultural soils; calls therefore for caution when considering mixing of waste streams and for appropriate safeguards;

30. Stresses that food safety is paramount and that food waste reduction measures must not compromise current food safety standards; stresses that the fight against food wastage should not compromise food safety and environmental standards, nor animal protection standards, notably animal health and welfare;

31. Calls on the Commission to encourage competent authorities in the Member States to adopt measures to control the safety of food from the point of view of health wherever necessary in order to build citizens' and consumers' trust in policies which contribute to food wastage reduction;

32. Notes that preventing the generation of food waste is the priority measure to be pursued, when correctly managing waste in line with the principles of the circular economy; stresses, however, that it is presently impossible to bring food waste generation down to zero; deems it necessary, therefore, to lay down mandatory EU measures to ensure that food waste can be turned into new resources;

33. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to provide economic incentives to support the collection of unused food, which can either be redistributed to charities or re-used for another secondary purpose which prevents food waste, such as turning unused food into a valuable resource, by using it in the production of feed for livestock and domestic animals;

34. Notes the potential for optimisation of use of food unavoidably lost or discarded and by-products from the food chain, in particular those of animal origin, in feed production, nutrient recycling and production of soil improvers and their importance for primary production;

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35. Stresses that more effective European legislation on by-products in Directive 2008/98/EC could help to significantly reduce food waste; calls on the Commission, to that end, to support, particularly through the Horizon 2020 programme, projects involving agri-food companies designed to facilitate synergies between agriculture and industry;
36. Reiterates the need for the Commission to draw up a report by 31 December 2018 to assess the need for cross-cutting regulatory measures in the sustainable consumption and production sector; and to draft an impact report to identify the regulations whose interaction is acting as a barrier to the development of synergies between sectors, and is hindering the use of by-products;
37. Stresses that the use of stocks and food that would otherwise be wasted does not preclude the need for good supply management and wise management of the food chain to avoid systematic structural surpluses;
38. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the higher-grade use of former foodstuffs and by-products from the entire food chain in the production of animal feed;
39. Calls on the Commission to analyse legal barriers to the use of former foodstuffs in feed production and to promote research in this area, while at the same time stressing the need for increased traceability, compliance with biosecurity standards and using separation and treatment processes that bring food safety risk down to zero;
40. Welcomes the recent creation of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, which is intended to identify priority measures to be adopted at EU level to prevent food losses and food waste, and facilitates the exchange of information between the operators involved; stresses, to that end, that the relevant involvement of the European Parliament in the Platform's work would be desirable; calls on the Commission to provide Parliament with a precise list of measures currently being taken and the objectives and sub-objectives pursued, as well as the progress being made on a common methodology and on donations; considers that the Platform could be the right tool for measuring not only how much is wasted but also food surplus and recovery quantities; remains convinced, however, that this can only be a very first step to address the problem of food waste;
41. Calls on the Commission to have the proceedings of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste made available in the 24 EU languages;
42. Calls on the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food Waste, *inter alia*, to support the development of a variety of consumer information channels as well as consumer information and foodstuff education programmes; urges the Platform to facilitate local stakeholder cooperation on food waste prevention and donation initiatives, with a focus on reducing the corresponding transaction costs; reiterates the importance of exchanging best practices, combining knowledge and avoiding duplication with other relevant forums such as, for example, the EU Retail Forum on Sustainability, the European Food Sustainable Consumption and Production Roundtable, the High Level Forum for a Better Functioning Food Supply Chain, and the Consumer Goods Forum;
43. Calls on the Commission, within the framework of the EU Platform on Food Losses and Food waste, to assess the best practices that have hitherto been implemented in the different Member States in order to better define effective instruments to reduce food waste;
44. Considers that, in order to reduce food waste as much as possible, it is necessary to involve all participants in the food supply chain and to target the various causes of waste on a sector-by-sector basis; calls on the Commission, therefore, to conduct an analysis of the whole food chain in order to identify the food sectors in which food waste is the most prevalent, and which solutions could be used to prevent food waste;
45. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to exchange, promote and support successful food waste reduction practices and resource conservation methods that are already being employed by stakeholders; encourages the Member States and local and regional authorities to consult the relevant stakeholders on what targeted sectoral measures should be taken in the context of food waste prevention;

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46. Emphasises that the Commission and the Member States should first and foremost consult with all key stakeholders — including the agricultural sector — and carry out an impact assessment on any proposed measures to be implemented to prevent food waste throughout the Union;

47. Encourages the Commission, the Member States and regional and local authorities, in cooperation with all stakeholders, to engage in improving the understanding, especially by consumers, of 'use by' and 'best before' dates, and of the usability of foodstuffs after the 'best before' date, *inter alia*, by carrying out awareness-raising and education campaigns and by facilitating easier access to and the provision of comprehensive and understandable product information; points out that the use of dual-date labelling, for example 'sell by' and 'use by', on the same product can have a negative effect on consumers' food management decisions; stresses the importance of empowering consumers in order to help them make informed decisions;

48. Calls on the Commission, as part of its ongoing evaluation, to assess, in particular: whether existing EU legislation and the practice of 'best before' and 'use by' dates in a number of Member States is fit for purpose; whether a revision of the 'use by' and 'best before' dates terminology should be considered so as to make it easier for consumers to understand them; whether it might be beneficial to remove certain dates for products where no health or environmental risks are involved, and whether it might be advisable to introduce European guidelines on this issue; asks the Commission to carry out a research study in order to evaluate the link between date marking and food waste prevention;

49. Welcomes the initiative taken by some large retail operators to promote schemes for making changes to the sales prices of products for consumption in line with expiry dates, with a view to boosting consumer awareness and encouraging the purchase of products which are close to their expiry dates;

50. In view of the fact that many food products, in the days following the expiry of the 'best before' date, still retain their organoleptic and nutritional characteristics, although to a reduced extent, and continue to be consumable, provided food safety principles are complied with; calls on the Commission to identify logistical and organisational models that could make it possible to recover, in total safety, all product types that are unsold to date;

51. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider variable pricing linked to expiry dates, as a tool for reducing the quantity of edible food products which become waste; considers that waste in the distribution stage can be reduced considerably by introducing discounts in proportion to the time remaining before product expiry; believes that such a practice, which is currently carried out on a voluntary basis, should be promoted and supported;

52. Asks the Commission to update the list of foods currently exempt from 'best before' labelling in order to prevent food waste;

53. Considers that increased research and information is needed on use-by dates, geared to each product, along with action to promote and boost consumption of fresh and loose produce, and to reduce long-term packaging and storage;

54. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, regional and local authorities and stakeholders to establish information and communication campaigns to promote the understanding of consumers and all operators in the food chain of food waste prevention, food safety, the value of food and good food processing, management and consumption practices; stresses that these initiatives should emphasise that combating food waste brings benefits not only for the environment, but also in economic and social terms; calls for the deployment and promotion of modern information tools, such as the use of mobile applications, in order to reach out to younger generations, who primarily use digital media; calls for the issue of food wastage and hunger — a serious problem today — to be properly addressed; points out the need for solidarity and for sharing with those most in need;

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55. Urges the Council and the Commission to designate a European Year against Food Waste, as a key information and awareness-raising initiative for European citizens, and to seek to focus the attention of national governments on this important topic, with a view to making sufficient funds available to tackle the challenges of the near future;
56. Emphasises the importance of educating and engaging children in food waste prevention; notes that the European Court of Auditors' Special Report No 34/2016 on Combating Food Waste underscores the importance of including food waste-related educational messages in the accompanying measures of the School Milk and the School Fruit and Vegetables Schemes and reports that very few Member States have chosen to do so; encourages the competent authorities of the Member States to harness the full potential of these schemes, which aim to instil good eating habits in young people and provide opportunities to learn about fresh food and agricultural production processes;
57. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to motivate households to combat food wastage by promoting a weekly leftovers day and by providing information on the best shopping and cooking practices for consumers to follow to reduce their food wastage;
58. Stresses the importance of tailoring distribution, conservation and packaging procedures closely to the features of each product and to consumer needs, in order to limit product wastage;
59. Stresses the importance, with a view to reducing waste, of ensuring that food is distributed and kept using methods which are appropriate for the characteristics of each product;
60. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and stakeholders to provide consumers with better information on methods for keeping and/or reusing products;
61. Underlines the important role of local authorities and municipal enterprises, alongside that of retailers and the media, in providing information and assistance to citizens on how best to keep and/or use food in order to prevent and reduce food waste;
62. Calls on the Commission, in cooperation with the Member States, to issue recommendations on refrigeration temperatures, in view of evidence showing that non-optimal and inappropriate temperatures lead to food becoming prematurely inedible and generate unnecessary waste; underlines the fact that harmonised temperature levels throughout the supply chain would improve product conservation and reduce food waste for products that are transported and sold across borders;
63. Highlights the need for the agri-food sector to improve the planning of its production with a view to restricting food surpluses; stresses, however, that a minimum level of food surpluses is currently a physiological factor in the entire agri-food chain, and that surpluses are also caused by external factors which cannot be controlled; considers, for this reason, that measures intended to encourage donations may constitute an important tool in preventing food surpluses from becoming waste;
64. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to encourage innovation and investment in processing technologies in agricultural production in an effort to reduce food wastage in the food supply chain and to reduce losses in food production on family farms;
65. Encourages Member States to use the European Agriculture Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) to reduce food waste in primary production and the processing sector;
66. Stresses the importance of bringing together farmers in cooperatives or professional associations in order to reduce food losses by strengthening their knowledge of markets, allowing more efficient programming and economies of scale, and improving their capacity to market their production;

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67. Highlights the importance of cooperation, for example via producer organisations or other bodies such as inter-branch organisations and cooperatives, for increased access to finance for innovation and investment in treatment technologies such as composting and anaerobic digestion, where appropriate, or further processing of products which could allow farmers to access new products, markets and customers; points out, in this connection, that sectoral organisation and the use of contracts result in better production management and more effective action against food wastage; believes that it is essential that this is done at local or regional level to respect the proximity principle;

68. Notes the benefits of cooperation and digitalisation, which allows better access to data and demand forecasts, and developing advance production programmes for farmers, enabling them to tailor their production to demand, better coordinate with the other sectors of the food supply chain, and minimise wastage; given the challenging nature of reducing unavoidable food waste, stresses that effective use of food waste, including in the bio economy, should be promoted;

69. Takes the view that in order to better match product supply to demand, labelling rules that provide appropriate information on the origin of the ingredients and the production and processing techniques used would enable consumers to make more informed purchases, thereby having an indirect influence also on production factors, which would have a positive impact in environmental, economic and social terms;

70. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to better inform farmers and consumers about more efficient management of energy, water and natural resources throughout the food chain, so as to significantly reduce waste of resources and food, with the aim of reducing input costs and nutrient wastage and increasing innovation and sustainability within farming systems;

71. Considers that increased research and information is needed to avoid food waste in primary production and to replace resource-wasting practices in agricultural production, food processing or distribution, with environmentally friendly methods;

72. Stresses that, in order to keep food waste to an absolute minimum, farmers should be put in a position, both technically and economically, to use their products in the most resource efficient way;

73. Believes that farmer- and community-led initiatives can offer sustainable, economically viable solutions and provide value for products which might otherwise go to waste, by developing markets for products that would normally be excluded from the food chain, and highlights the potential of farmer- and community-led social innovation projects such as gleaning and donation of excess foodstuffs to food aid associations, including food banks; calls on the Commission and the Member States to recognise practices of this kind and to promote them under the second CAP pillar;

74. Stresses that, in order to reduce wastage at the production stage, innovative techniques and technologies should be used to optimise performance in the fields and convert those products that do not meet market standards into processed goods;

75. Points out that large quantities of perfectly edible fruits and vegetables do not reach the market for aesthetic reasons and on account of marketing standards; notes that there are successful initiatives that make use of such products, and encourages stakeholders from the wholesale and retail sector to promote such practices; calls on the Commission and the Member States to boost the development of markets for such foods, and to undertake research on the relation between marketing standards and food waste in this context;

76. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to work together to influence the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) public standards with the aim of avoiding the waste of resources by preventing the generation of food waste;

77. Considers that increased cooperation among producers and utilisation of producer organisations is needed in order to enable and promote access to secondary market opportunities, other outlets and alternative uses for food surpluses, which would otherwise be ploughed back into the soil or wasted, giving priority to re-use for the purpose of human consumption, such as selling at lower grade for processed foods and selling at local markets;

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78. Notes that those products that can still be used for non-food purposes, such as conversion into feed, fertilisation of fields or use for the production of compost and energy, should be clearly distinguished from those considered to be waste, in order not to jeopardise their re-use;
79. Notes that the amount of rejected crops could be reduced if they were sold closer to consumers, for example in farmers' markets and farm shops, where marketing circuits are short and the products purchased are local products with little processing;
80. Encourages the Member States and the Commission to promote local food and to support short food-supply chains and in-home selling of agricultural products;
81. Stresses that local and regional products, as well as community-supported agriculture schemes, enable shorter supply chains, which increase the quality standards of products and support seasonal demands, thus having considerable social, environmental and economic benefits;
82. Believes that short supply chains can play a vital role in reducing food waste and over-packaging, reducing food miles and providing higher quality food and transparent food chains, and, in doing so, underpin the economic viability of rural communities;
83. Calls for the promotion of seasonal fruits and vegetables in every Member State;
84. Calls for particular attention to be devoted to animal welfare;
85. Calls on the Commission and Member States to adopt measures to reduce losses due to poor animal welfare;
86. Stresses that unfair commercial practices in the supply chain can create food waste; calls on the Commission and Member States to examine how unfair trade practices in the food supply chain generate food waste, and to create a policy framework to combat such practices where necessary;
87. Believes that resolving the problem of unfair trading practices will improve the position of farmers, the weakest links in the chain, and, by lowering overproduction and the accumulation of surpluses, could help not only to stabilise prices and provide farmers with fair and remunerative farm-gate prices, but also to reduce both food wastage along the entire chain and losses generated on family farms; points out that fairer pay to producers would increase the value of the products, resulting in a reduction of food wastage in the final links of the supply chain;
88. Stresses that local and regional authorities and stakeholders have a key responsibility to implement food waste reduction and prevention programmes, and asks the Commission and the Member States to take this into account at all stages of the process;
89. Calls on the Commission to recognise the role played by public agencies providing services of general interest in waste management and in efforts to combat food waste and the efforts of undertakings such as SMEs that make a direct contribution to the circular economy;
90. Calls on the Member States to encourage local governments, civil society, supermarkets and other relevant stakeholders to support food waste reduction initiatives and contribute to a local food strategy, for example, by informing consumers, via a mobile application, about unsold foods, aligning demand and supply;
91. Welcomes the setting-up of food establishments where food that is fit for consumption can be left to those in need ('foodsharing'); calls for procedures to be simplified to make the establishment of such facilities easier;

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92. Takes the view that the greatest barrier in the EU to the delivery of still edible surplus food to those in need is the shortage, or sometimes complete lack of, capacity in the distribution channels; notes that charitable organisations and state- or local government-run social work bodies do not have enough material or human resources to transport and distribute the still edible food offered for charitable purposes; notes that this is true in particular for the most disadvantaged regions;

93. Notes that the food industry has already taken initiatives to reduce food waste by strengthening cooperation with food aid associations, including food banks throughout Europe;

94. Calls on the Commission to promote the creation in Member States of agreements stipulating that the retail food sector shall distribute unsold products to charity associations;

95. Calls for increased engagement by all stakeholders to make sure that any food that is about to expire is first donated to charity; notes, however, that there are still barriers to donations, mainly of a legal nature; calls on the Commission to clarify the interpretation of the legal provisions discouraging donations;

96. Is concerned that 'clarification of relevant EU legislation related to waste, food and feed in order to facilitate food donation and utilisation of former foodstuffs for animal feed', as announced for 2016 ⁽¹⁾, has not yet been tackled;

97. Welcomes the draft EU guidelines on food donation as a first step in the right direction; however, with a view to the various barriers to food donation contained in EU legislation, believes that the donation of unsold food along the entire food supply chain needs to be promoted further by enacting legislative changes;

98. Calls on the Commission to explore the modalities for donating food to charities from companies in the country of production, regardless of the language on the product packaging; points out that donations of said goods should be made possible when the information critical for maintaining food safety, e.g. on allergens, is made available to recipients in official languages of their Member States;

99. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to facilitate local and regional stakeholder cooperation on food donation by reducing transaction costs to lower the threshold for participation, e.g. by offering template tools that can be adapted to specific local needs and used by local actors to match supply and demand of surplus food and to organise logistics more efficiently;

100. Welcomes the establishment of 'Social Grocery Shops', as well as public and private partnerships with charity organisations, to make the best possible use of food that is edible but not sellable;

101. Calls on the Member States to ensure institutional and financial support to social supermarkets, as they are a key mediator in food donation;

102. Notes that food sector operators which carry out free transfers of food surpluses must abide by sound operational practices in order to guarantee food safety in terms of hygiene and health, in accordance with the provisions of Regulation (EC) No 852/2004;

103. Stresses the important role that national authorities can play to help actors throughout the food supply chain use edible food and food close to expiry, by taking a promotional rather than a punitive approach when implementing food safety rules;

104. Calls on the Commission to explore the possibility and effects of introducing 'Good Samaritan' legislation; calls on the Commission to clarify how legislative acts such as Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 and Directive 85/374/EEC regulate liability in food donation;

⁽¹⁾ Annex to the Communication from the Commission COM(2015)0614.

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105. Calls on the Commission to propose a change in the VAT Directive that would explicitly authorise tax exemptions on food donations; calls on the Member States to follow the Commission's recommendations and to set a VAT rate that is close to zero if a food donation is made close to the recommended expiry date or if the food is unsellable;

106. Calls on the Commission to complement Regulation (EU) No 223/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 on the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived ⁽¹⁾ with an implementing act that promotes the use of FEAD to facilitate food donations by financing the costs of collection, transport, storage and distribution and that regulates the use of intervention stocks under the CAP; encourages local, regional and national authorities to support the setting-up of food donation infrastructure in regions and areas where it is non-existent, inadequate or under capacitated;

107. Calls on the Commission and the Member States not to divert FEAD resources that had been previously set aside for food banks and charitable organisations towards other target groups;

108. Points out that food donations cannot be seen as a clear measure to solve the core problems of poverty; stresses, therefore, that unrealistic expectations should be avoided in this regard: food donations cannot be expected to both mitigate social problems and prevent food waste; calls on the Commission, therefore, to take more determined action in poverty prevention;

109. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to be vigilant with regard to donations and to make sure that they are not used to create an alternative market, as that could lead to those in need not benefiting from food donations and discourage businesses from donating;

110. Calls on the Commission and the Member States, without placing an unnecessary burden on SMEs and voluntary organisations, to closely monitor food donations in order to make sure that the food is not siphoned off and sold on alternative markets, as this would prevent it from reaching those in need and discourage people in the trade from making donations, on account of the risk of this resulting in unfair competition;

111. Calls on all actors in the food supply chain to take their shared responsibility and implement the Joint Food Wastage Declaration 'Every Crumb Counts' and the 'Retail agreement on waste'; points out that the retail sector meets millions of consumers every day, and is in a unique position to boost knowledge and raise awareness about food waste, thereby facilitating informed choices; underlines that marketing practices such as 'buy one, get one free' increase the risk that consumers buy more than they can use; highlights in this regard, moreover, the need to offer smaller package sizes for smaller households; welcomes the fact that some retailers sell food items with short use-by dates at discount prices but believes that this practice should be more widespread;

112. Reiterates that egg waste is still one of the main issues for retailers; asks the Commission to look into ways to reduce egg waste, taking into account the scientific assessment from EFSA, and asks Member States to properly inform consumers about this important issue;

113. Calls on the Commission to undertake a study on the impact of reforms of the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP) and the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) on the generation and reduction of food waste;

114. Emphasises that farmers' livelihoods depend on getting produce to the market under fair conditions and at remunerative prices and that loss of produce at farm level, including produce lost due to extreme or unusual climate events, damaged in a natural disaster or destroyed because a market has been lost or prices are low, amounts to a loss of investment and income for farmers; points out, in this connection, that price volatility on agricultural markets affects production and farmers' incomes and can result in food going to waste, and that appropriate tools to address price volatility therefore need to be built into the CAP;

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 72, 12.3.2014, p. 1.

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115. Stresses that the Commission has not yet conducted a study to determine the impact of the different reforms on the volume of agricultural production and its effect on food waste, and calls therefore on the Commission to integrate the issue of food waste into its future policy development and implementation of the CAP;

116. Emphasises that food wastage at the production stage can also stem from the deterioration of our agricultural production base resulting from the degradation of land, biodiversity (reduced pollination) and natural resources of all kinds, and that due account needs to be taken of this in the future development of farming and the CAP;

117. Encourages the Member States to harness the full potential of the European Fisheries Fund (EFF) and the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) in order to reduce food waste from fish discards and improve survival rates of aquaculture-grown organisms;

118. Is hopeful that the landing obligation in the CFP, which is currently being phased in, will lead to more selective fishing gears and practices and ultimately to less fish being discarded at sea; notes, however, that the landing obligation does not apply to all fish and therefore further measures are needed;

119. Is concerned about the level of waste generated after fish are caught, given their perishable nature and the often extreme voyages that they undergo for processing, including frequently going from Europe to Asia and back to Europe for final sale;

120. Reiterates the importance of the 'water footprint' concept for food and feed;

121. Points out that Regulation (EC) No 178/2002 includes among foods even water 'intentionally incorporated into the food during its manufacture, preparation or treatment' and that water is a key strategic resource for the entire agri-food industry;

122. Stresses that food wastage, depending on the quality, type and quantity of water used for food production, also involves a substantial waste of water;

123. Points to the importance of improving water management in agriculture, developing 'water-smart' food production systems and increasing water and food safety and security in areas that are most at risk because of climate change;

124. Stresses that innovative and environmentally friendly solutions in areas such as the management of co- and by-products of food production, food trade, food storage, shelf-life, digital technologies, and food contact materials, can offer significant potential for food waste reduction; encourages the Commission, the Member States and other stakeholders to support research in these areas and to promote sustainable and effective solutions; believes that collaborative economy services are important for boosting awareness and promoting sustainable consumption; calls on the Commission to advance innovation through research projects and programmes financed by the EU budget, such as the European Innovation Partnership;

125. Underlines the responsibility of all actors in the supply chain, including producers of packaging systems, in preventing food waste; stresses the positive contribution of food packaging materials and solutions to the prevention of food loss and food waste along the supply chain, for example packaging that reduces food loss in transport, storage and distribution, and that preserves the quality and hygiene of food for longer, or that extends shelf life; underlines, however, the need to make packaging fit for purpose (i.e. no over- or under-packaging) and appropriate for the product and consumer needs, as well as the need to consider the life-cycle perspective on the packaged product as a whole, including the design and use of the packaging; invites the Commission and the Member States to assess the benefits of bio-based, biodegradable and compostable food packaging, by taking into account the impact on human health and food safety and taking a life-cycle approach; stresses that food waste reduction objectives must be consistent with the measures and objectives in Directive 94/62/EC, in particular the objective of a significant reduction in the consumption of non-recyclable packaging and excessive packaging;

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126. Encourages the Commission and the Member States to support the development and deployment of active and intelligent food contact materials and other innovative solutions that contribute positively to resource efficiency and the circular economy; points out that the relevant food contact material legislation should ensure a maximum level of consumer protection for all packaging material, including imported material from third countries; calls on the Commission, therefore, to present harmonised EU rules for food contact materials and to prioritise the drawing-up of specific EU measures for materials such as paper and board in line with Parliament's resolution of 6 October 2016 on the implementation of the Food Contact Materials Regulation (EC) No 1935/2004 ⁽¹⁾;
127. Recommends promoting the use of voluntary codes of good practice in business developed by sectoral organisations in the food, catering and hotel sectors to aim to make optimal use of products and to promote donations to schemes aimed at collecting excess food for social purposes;
128. Calls on the Member States to encourage the conclusion of agreements or memoranda of understanding to promote responsible conduct and good practices designed to reduce food waste, including equipping catering operators with reusable containers made of recyclable material, in order to enable customers to take home their leftover food;
129. Recommends that, when appropriate, local and regional products and seasonal products be used in the catering and hospitality sector in order to shorten the production and consumption chain, thereby reducing the number of processing stages and thus the amount of waste generated during the various phases;
130. Stresses the fact that developments in the digital sector offer many opportunities for preventing the generation of food waste, in particular the creation of online 'food rescue' platforms, which enable the catering sector to offer unsold dishes at reduced prices; highlights the fact that experiments such as these have yielded significant results in the Member States in which they have been developed;
131. Calls on the Commission to recognise the contribution of socially responsible initiatives, such as the 'Healthy Nutritional Standard', the objective of which is to provide better information on food to different groups of consumers with special food needs or preferences through voluntary and co-regulated food labelling in restaurants and tourism in order to reduce food wastage in that field;
132. Calls on the Commission and Member States to work in cooperation with developing countries to help improve their food chain infrastructure and reduce their food waste levels;
133. Urges all institutions and bodies of the European Union to include the requirement that catering-related tenders be accompanied by food waste management and reduction plans; asks the Quaestors to give priority to actions to reduce food waste in the European Parliament and encourages other European institutions to follow suit; encourages the Member States and local and regional authorities to reduce food waste in public establishments;
134. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and the national parliaments.
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⁽¹⁾ Texts adopted, P8_TA(2016)0384.